



# News Release

## WISCONSIN ARMY AND AIR NATIONAL GUARD

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

## **'Welcome Home' celebrations planned for 724th Engineer Battalion units**

### **Events in Rhinelander, Hayward, Spooner, Medford**

More than one full year after they were ordered to active duty, 500 soldiers of the 724th Engineer Battalion will be returning to their hometown armories this weekend.

National Guard officials are planning "welcome home" celebrations for the soldiers and their families in the communities of Rhinelander, Hayward, Spooner, and Medford. The public is encouraged to attend. These events are in addition to other activities planned in some of the 724th Engineer Battalion's communities, which also include Superior, Tomahawk and Chippewa Falls.

The Wisconsin Army National Guard's commander, Brig. Gen. Kerry Denson, and Lt. Gov. Barbara Lawton will lead officials participating in the welcome home events. Other public officials from the local communities, the state legislature and the U.S. Congress have also been invited to take part.

Planned events include:

#### **Rhinelander — Co. C, 724th Engineer Battalion**

**Time:** Saturday, April 3, 3:30 p.m.

**Place:** Rhinelander National Guard Armory, 1136 Military Rd., Rhinelander

**Expected Participants:** Lt. Gov. Barbara Lawton, Brig. Gen. Kerry Denson, Rhinelander Mayor Kevin Jenkins, State Sen. Roger Breske. Other officials are also expected to participate, however they had not been confirmed by late Friday afternoon.

The Rhinelander welcome home celebration will honor about 120 National Guard soldiers mobilized March 15, 2003, and who were deployed overseas last May. Also present will be family members, friends, and community supporters. Music will be provided by members of the Wisconsin National Guard's 132nd Army Band.

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## **Hayward — Headquarters Company, 724th Engineer Battalion**

**Time:** Sunday, April 4, 11:00 a.m.

**Place:** Hayward High School, Greenwood Ln.

**Expected Participants:** Lt. Gov. Barbara Lawton, Brig. Gen. Kerry Denson, Hayward city officials, State Sen. Robert Jauch. Other officials are also expected to participate, however they had not been confirmed by late Friday afternoon.

The Hayward welcome home celebration will honor about 110 National Guard soldiers mobilized March 15, 2003, and who were deployed overseas last May. Also present will be family members, friends, and community supporters. Music will be provided by the Wisconsin National Guard's 132nd Army Band.

## **Spooner — Company B, 724th Engineer Battalion**

**Time:** Sunday, April 4, 1:30 p.m.

**Place:** High School gym, 500 College St.

**Expected Participants:** Lt. Gov. Barbara Lawton, Brig. Gen. Kerry Denson, State Sen. Robert Jauch. Other officials are also expected to participate, however they had not been confirmed by late Friday afternoon.

The Spooner welcome home celebration will honor about 130 National Guard soldiers mobilized March 15, 2003 and who deployed overseas last May. Also present will be family members, friends, and community supporters. Music will be provided by the Spooner High School band and choir and by members of the Wisconsin National Guard's 132nd Army Band.

## **Medford — Company A, 724th Engineer Battalion**

**Time:** Monday, April 5, 10:30 a.m.

**Place:** Medford Middle School, 509 Clark St.

**Expected Participants:** Lt. Gov. Barbara Lawton, Brig. Gen. Kerry Denson, Medford Mayor Mike Brandner. Other officials are also expected to participate, however they had not been confirmed by late Friday afternoon.

The Medford welcome home celebration will honor about 120 National Guard soldiers mobilized March 15, 2003, and who were deployed overseas last May. Also present will be family members, friends, and community supporters. Music will be provided by the Wisconsin National Guard's 132nd Army Band.

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The 724th Engineer Battalion was mobilized March 15, 2003, and deployed to Southwest Asia May 8. Members of the unit served at a base in central Iraq, where they provided engineer support to coalition forces and also helped rebuild Iraqi infrastructure, including rehabilitating schools. The battalion's soldiers arrived back in Wisconsin aboard seven military aircraft that landed at Volk Field Air National Guard Base late last Friday night through early Tuesday morning. They have been completing demobilization processing at Fort McCoy until they are released to their hometown armories this weekend.

The Wisconsin Guard still has about 815 soldiers and airmen on active duty. Of those, 350 are deployed overseas.

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